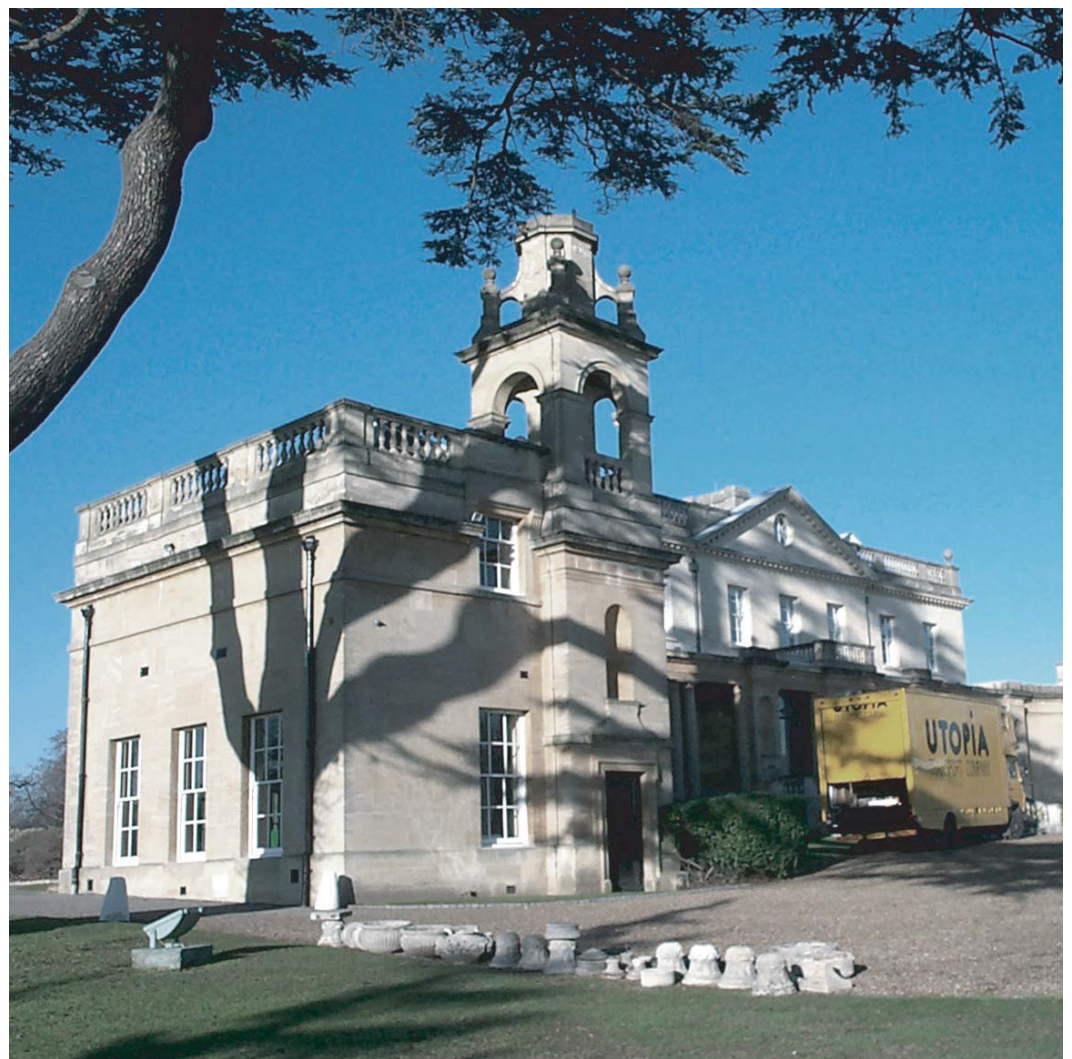


Langley Park House Buckinghamshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report on a Geotechnical Test Pit



Ref:55180.02

January 2004

**LANGLEY PARK HOUSE
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
on a
Geotechnical Test Pit**

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Figure 1: Site location, and location of test pit

Figure 2: Diagrammatic section drawing and photograph of geotechnical test pit

Cover: Langley Park House, front (east) elevation

**LANGLEY PARK HOUSE
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
on a Geotechnical Test Pit**

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Alexander Associates, to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of a geotechnical test pit on land adjacent to Langley Park House, Buckinghamshire, centred on National Grid Ref 500900 181560.

The geotechnical test pit was excavated in advance of the proposed excavation of a 7m x 3.5m area to accommodate a temporary pool, associated with the production of a film. Although no archaeological features were revealed by the test pit, a number of Post-medieval layers were recorded in section, which may have related to former garden features.

Subsequent to the watching brief, it was decided to abandon the sunken pool in favour of a 'free-standing' pool in the same location.

**LANGLEY PARK HOUSE
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
on a Geotechnical Test Pit**

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Alexander Associates. The assistance and co-operation of both Richard Lawman at Alexander Associates and Sandy Kidd, Senior Archaeologist to Buckinghamshire County Council are greatly appreciated.

The fieldwork was carried out by Howard Brown with finds analysis undertaken by Lorraine Mephram. The illustrations were prepared by Rob Goller. This report was compiled by Rob Armour Chelu who also managed the project on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.

LANGLEY PARK HOUSE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief Report on a Geotechnical Test Pit

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Alexander Associates, to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of a geotechnical test pit on land adjacent to Langley Park House, Buckinghamshire, centred on National Grid Ref 500900 181560.
- 1.1.2 The geotechnical test pit was excavated in advance of the proposed excavation of a 7m x 3.5m area to accommodate a temporary pool, associated with the production of a film, and in support of a planning application already lodged with the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.1.3 The watching brief was undertaken in December 2003 in accordance with advice from Buckinghamshire County Council's Senior Archaeologist.

2 THE SITE

- 2.1.1 The Site comprised an area of lawn adjacent to, and south of Langley Park House, centred on NGR 500900 181560 (**Figure 1**).

3 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Geology

- 3.1.1 The Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales, Solid and Drift Edition 1:50,000, Sheet 255) shows the geology of the Site to comprise Terrace Gravels of the Boyn Hill Terrace.

3.2 Topography

- 3.2.1 The Site lies between 35m and 40m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and is situated immediately south of Langley Park House itself. The lawn area into which the test pit was excavated formed part of a slightly raised artificial mound, upon which the main house is constructed.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1.1 The Langley Park Estate is located in the parish of Wexham, south Buckinghamshire. It comprises the historic Langley Park, Black Park and the adjoining Rowley Farm and is now owned by Buckinghamshire County Council.

- 4.1.2 The history and known archaeology of Langley Park is very well documented; indeed, the County Council, in association with a wide-ranging partnership of stakeholders is in the process of undertaking the Langley Park Historic Landscape Project, details of which are available from the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and on the County Council's website.
- 4.1.3 Given the very small scope of the project reported upon in this document, it is not proposed to enter into further discussion of the archaeological and historical background at this stage.

5 SCOPE OF THIS DOCUMENT

- 5.1.1 The aim of this document is to present the results from the watching brief in relation to both the known historical and archaeological features located in the immediate vicinity.

6 AIMS

- 6.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were to determine, as far as possible within the constraints of the geotechnical test pitting methodology, the location, extent, character and significance of any archaeological remains present within the area of the proposed temporary pool. On this basis, an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development on buried remains, and an appraisal of the need for further archaeological intervention could be made and an informed decision reached.

7 METHOD

- 7.1.1 In accordance with the approved Specification, the geotechnical test pit was excavated by hand under constant archaeological supervision. The test pit measured approximately 1m square, and was excavated to a depth of 1m (**Figure 2**).
- 7.1.2 Hand excavation was undertaken through a number of archaeological horizons, each of which was recorded and artefactual evidence retrieved to aid in dating the sequence.
- 7.1.3 Upon completion of the excavation, the test pit was recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording sheets. A drawn record was produced which included a 1:10 scale drawing of one section and a location plan, relating the position of the test pit to Langley Park House itself.
- 7.1.4 A full photographic record was also taken using both colour transparencies and black and white negatives (on 35mm film), with digital photography employed as appropriate. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and the general context of the archaeology revealed and the Site as a whole.

8 RESULTS

- 8.1.1 The test pit was excavated down to a depth of 1m below the current ground surface.

- 8.1.2 A total of six archaeological layers were recorded, including the topsoil/turf layer. Natural strata was not reached.
- 8.1.3 Without exception, the layers appeared to represent imported material, almost certainly associated with the construction of the apparently artificial mound upon which the main house is constructed. Finds recovered from these deposits suggest a Post-medieval date for the deposits, although closer dating proved impossible due to the nature of the material recovered.
- 8.1.4 Full descriptions of the recorded archaeological layers are available in tabulated form as **Appendix 1**.

9 FINDS

- 9.1.1 The only finds recovered during the watching brief comprised fragments of building material, both ceramic (brick and roof tile) and stone (limestone /ashlar); all of Post-medieval date. These derived from four separate contexts; quantities are summarised in **Table 1**. These finds are not recommended for long-term storage, and may be discarded with the agreement of the local museum.

Table 1: Finds by context

CONTEXT	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL		STONE	
	NUMBER	WEIGHT (G)	NUMBER	WEIGHT (G)
1	1	198		
2	4	651		
3	2	789		
4			1	166
TOTAL	7	1638	1	166

10 DISCUSSION

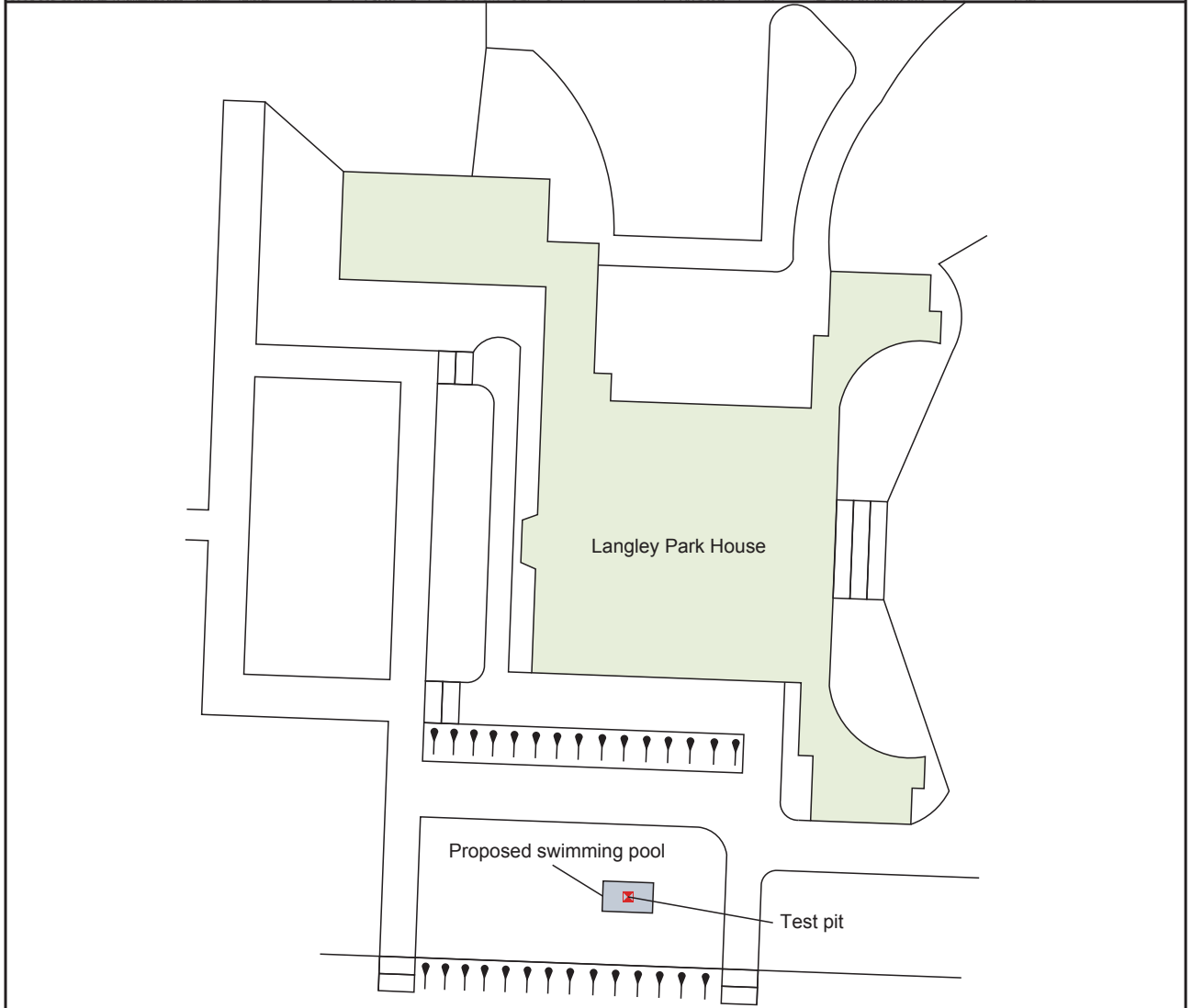
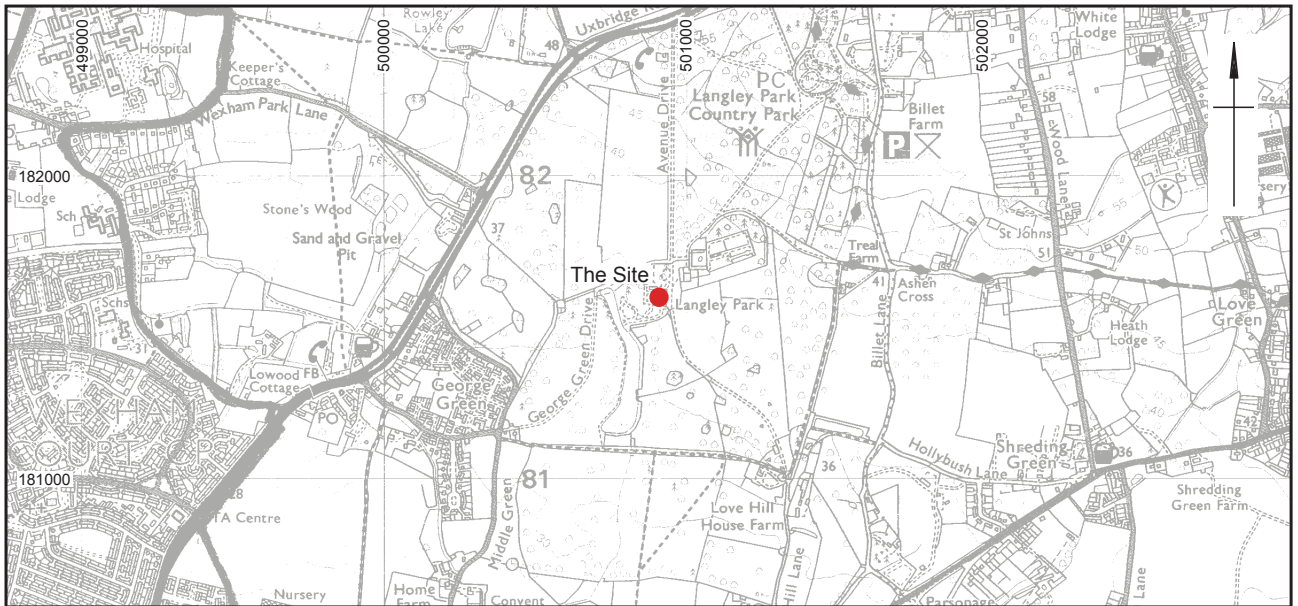
- 10.1.1 The watching brief demonstrated that the raised area upon which the main house is constructed is indeed an artificial construction, consisting of a number of layers of imported material.
- 10.1.2 Given the ‘keyhole’ nature of the test pit, it is impossible to identify any of the recorded deposits as indicative of garden related material, such as the remains of borders or paths, associated with earlier phases of the house and grounds.
- 10.1.3 Subsequent to the completion of the watching brief, plans to excavate an area to accommodate the proposed temporary pool were abandoned.

11 ARCHIVE

- 11.1.1 The project archive, consisting of an A4 ringbinder and a collection of black and white and colour photographs is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire under the project code **55180**. In due course the paper archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire Museum Services.

APPENDIX 1**TEST PIT CONTEXT SUMMARY**

Trench 1		Max Depth:0.25m	Length: 5m	Width: 2.00m
No.	Type	Description		Depth
1	<i>Layer</i>	Topsoil: dark grey loam, abundant sub-angular gravel		0-0.30m
2	<i>Layer</i>	Made ground: light grey sandy clay, rare sub-angular gravel		0.30-0.45m
3	<i>Layer</i>	Made ground: mid-grey silty clay, uncommon sub-angular gravel		0.45-0.55m
4	<i>Layer</i>	Made ground: dark grey silty clay, abundant sub-angular gravel		0.55-0.65m
5	<i>Layer</i>	Made ground: mid-brown silty clay, rare rounded stone		0.65-0.80m
6	<i>Layer</i>	Made ground: grey-brown clay, abundant sub-angular gravel		0.80-1.00m



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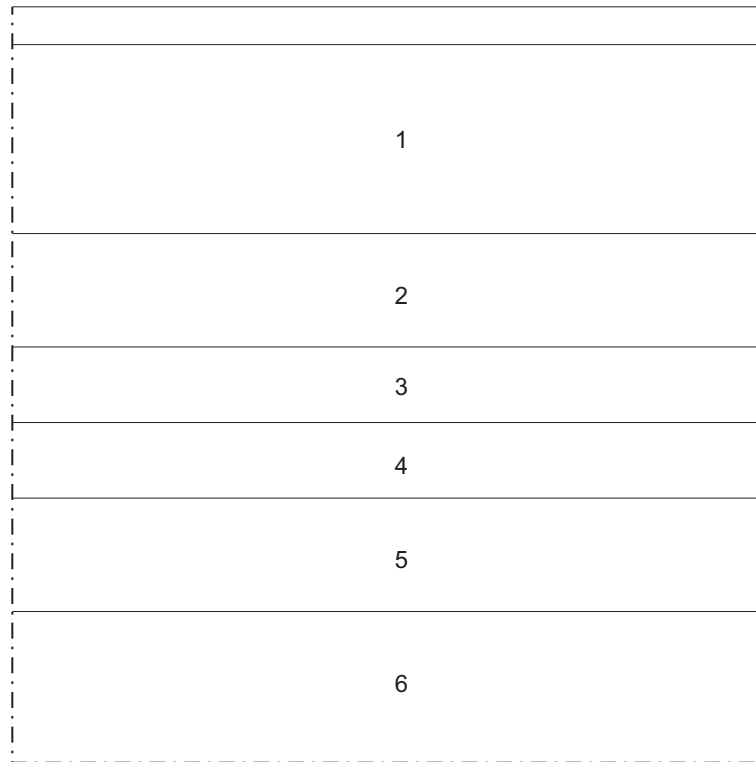
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Site location, and location of test-pit

Figure 1



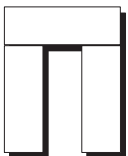
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Diagrammatic section drawing and photograph of geotechnical test pit

Figure 2



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